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## **FIRST LADY SHARON DAVIS LAUDS IBM FOR ANSWERING THE CALL FOR A MILLION MENTORS**

*Mrs. Davis Takes a Virtual Tour of IBM MentorPlace*

**SAN JOSE** – First Lady Sharon Davis today met with IBM officials and applauded the corporation's answer to California's call to increase the number of mentors statewide.

"I'm thrilled that IBM has provided such leadership by making this commitment to California's next generation of decision makers," Mrs. Davis said. "From the corporation to the classroom, we all share in what it takes to build a better tomorrow."

The Governor and First Lady have established a goal for the Governor's Mentoring Partnership (GMP) of recruiting one million mentors by 2005. In addition to working with the business community, Mrs. Davis works in close partnership with many community-based organizations and state entities, such as the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism (GO SERV), Alcohol and Drug Programs, Office of Secretary for Education and the Department of Health Services to meet this goal.

Mrs. Davis joined IBM officials at John Muir Middle School, where IBM unveiled IBM MentorPlace, a unique e-mentoring program between students and IBM employees. Through this unique online mentoring program, employees can become virtual volunteers, mentoring students in classrooms throughout the state. To further support students' success in schools, IBM announced its commitment to recruit 1,000 IBM employees as mentors by 2005.

IBM MentorPlace is a global initiative involving more than 3,500 IBM employees, and is part of the company's overall commitment to K-12 public school education.

"This program provides the structure and support for our employees who wish to volunteer in schools," said Doug Balog, IBM vice president of storage software development. "Most of our IBM MentorPlace programs feature one-to-one online mentoring between an IBM employee and a student during the school year. We work in partnership with the teacher at each site to ensure that the online communication between mentors and students links directly with classroom learning.

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“And we’re bringing innovative new technology to the table,” Balog continued. “IBM has developed a new Web site at [www.mentorplace.org](http://www.mentorplace.org), which contains a host of valuable resources, including online activities, which are guiding volunteers at our MentorPlace programs.”

IBM will significantly expand its pilot IBM MentorPlace program at John Muir Middle School to other schools in the San Jose Unified School District for the coming year. The company will also showcase the IBM Learning Village technology, which enables secure school-based communication that parallels classroom curricula.

Since 1995, more than 490,000 mentee matches have been made, however, tens of thousands of young people are still waiting for a mentor. By reaching out to all sectors of business, state and federal employees, the First Lady and GMP aim to increase the number of qualified mentors serving California’s schoolchildren.

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